

Wisconsin
Department of
Natural Resources

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Special Edition
Fall Hunting Preview

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Edited by Paul Holtan
Wisconsin DNR
PO Box 7921
Madison WI 53707-7921
(608) 267-7517
fax: (608) 264-6293
e-mail: holtap@dnr.state.wi.us
World Wide Web:
<http://www.dnr.state.wi.us>

Hunters can again look forward to excellent hunting opportunities in Wisconsin

A message from Darrell Bazzell, Secretary, Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources

Welcome to the 2001 Wisconsin Fall Hunting Preview. As the information provided in this special edition shows, Wisconsin hunters and visitors to our state can again look forward to another excellent fall hunting season. The exceptional hunting opportunities available in our state can be traced to the tremendous legacy Wisconsin has for the care and protection of natural resources.

We have citizens who care deeply about Wisconsin's natural resources – and who are willing to commit their time, money, and energy – and we have a top-notch, dedicated corps of natural resource professionals. We have integrated management of our state's natural resources that help assure we make the best decisions for sustaining healthy, diverse and abundant fish and wildlife along with clean air, clean water and beautiful landscapes.

(more)



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The results have been impressive. Wisconsin hunters last year set a national record for deer kills – 618,374 deer. Deer hunters will find great hunting opportunities again this fall. However, white tail numbers remain at record high levels and we need to continue to work toward bringing the herd closer to goal, through management tools such as the special Zone T hunts. Deer hunters are increasingly understanding the important role they play in helping to manage the herd by filling antlerless permits, and they are donating extra venison to feed the hungry. Last year Wisconsin hunters donated more than 350,000 pounds of venison that was distributed to needy families around the state.

Duck hunters will enjoy their fourth consecutive year of a 60-day season. Turkey hunters received a record 150,129 permits for the spring hunt and we had a record 71,600 permits available for this fall's hunt; up from 68,600 for last year's fall season. Bear hunters harvested 3,071 bears, 100 more bear than the year before. Still, the 2001 Wisconsin black bear population is estimated at 13,500 animals, with bear continuing to increase their range into many new areas of the state.

We've also made great progress restoring native species, such as the successful elk and trumpeter swan reintroduction programs, efforts to protect gray wolves, and now our newest effort to return whooping cranes to the state.

Hunting and fishing have *never* been better in our life times; clearly for many of us, these are the good old days. And we have a responsibility to ensure that we preserve, promote and expand outdoor recreation opportunities.

These longtime traditions strengthen family relationships, build memories, foster stewardship and create a spiritual connection with nature. Aldo Leopold wrote: "We can be ethical only in relation to something we can see, feel, understand, love or otherwise have faith in." Hunting and fishing connect people with natural resources in a way few other activities do.

Our changing lifestyle can be a barrier to building these connections. More children are growing up in urban areas in families that don't hunt or fish. That is why I encourage all of you to do all you can to introduce young people to the great outdoors. If you know children who may be interested, consider enrolling them and taking them to hunter education courses and then take them with you into field this fall. Not only will you and the young person benefit from the camaraderie of the hunt, the entire state will benefit as we continue to foster appreciation of our natural resources in future generations.

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White-tailed deer

Season Dates

Bow: Sept. 15 - Nov. 11

Nov. 12-15 Zone T DMUs only (either sex)

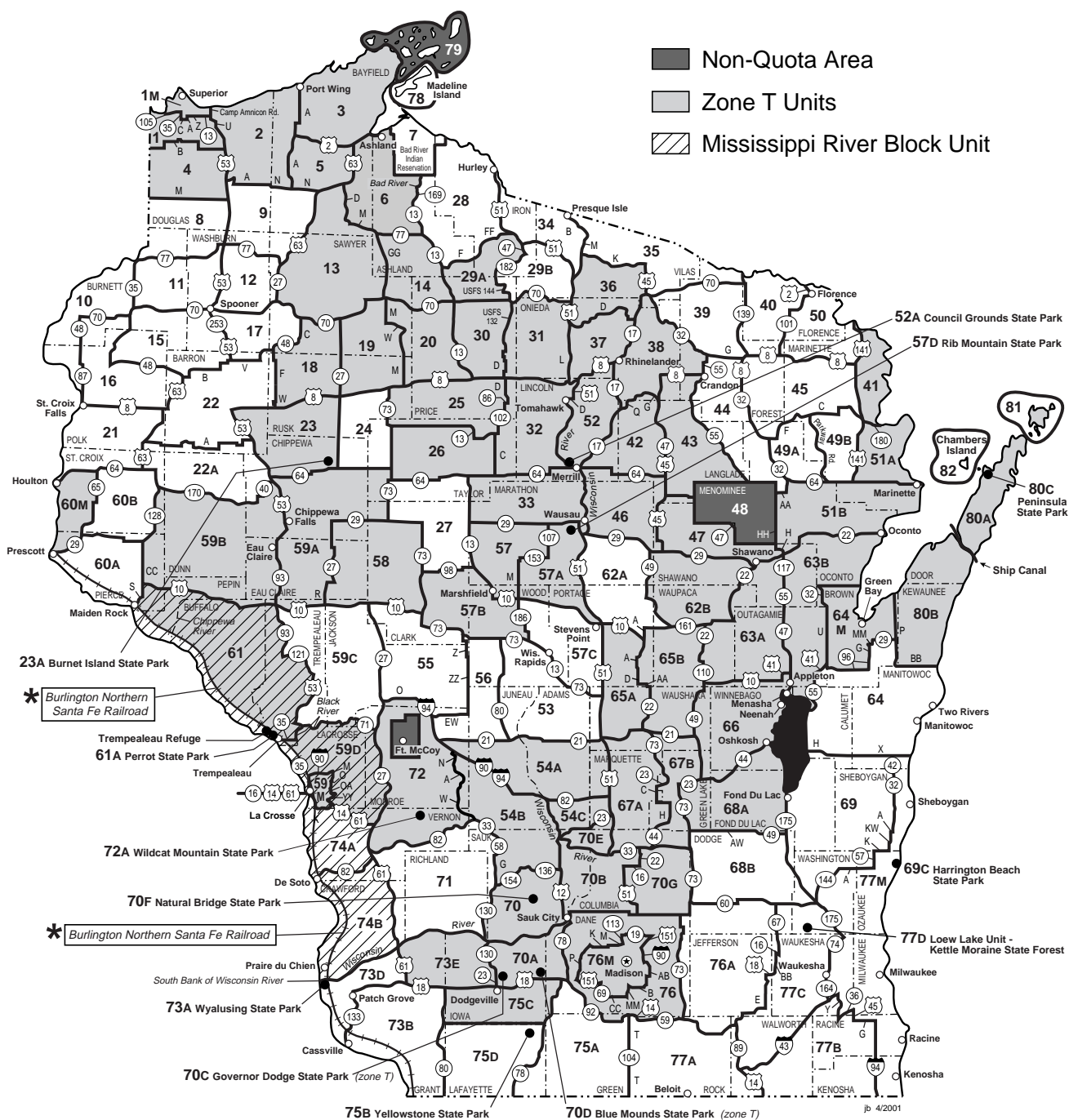
Dec. 1 - 31

Gun: Early Zone T: Oct. 25 – 28 (antlerless only for archery and firearm)

Regular gun: Nov. 17 - 25

Late Zone T: Dec. 6 – 9 (antlerless only for archery and firearm)

Muzzleloader: Nov. 26 - Dec. 2



The new millennium will be bringing many new challenges to the deer hunters of Wisconsin, especially with the state herd continuing to hover around 1.65 million animals. High deer populations have triggered another year of special herd control seasons. For the 2001 whitetail hunting season, 76 deer management units (DMUs) will be part of a Zone T hunt.

Hunters should note that there are several new units and boundary changes that will go into effect in 2001. These include modifications to DMUs 1, 6, 7, 28, 69A, 69B and 77M. Please review your regulation pamphlet to see the newly defined units.

Backtags for 2000

This season's firearm backtags contain a reference to an earn-a-buck category. **Earn-a-buck is not in effect in any unit in 2001**, and will not go into effect until 2004 at the earliest.

Hunters can expect a great deal of advance notice before any earn-a-buck seasons are implemented. In line with Natural Resource Board policy, earn-a-buck seasons would not be implemented in a deer management unit until after two consecutive Zone T seasons for the unit fail to bring deer populations within 20 percent of established population goals.

For more information contact Mead Klavetter at (608)-261-7589 or log onto the DNR DEER web site at: www.dnr.state.wi.us/org/land/wildlife/HUNT/deer/

Northern Region

Contact: Dave Evenson, regional wildlife biologist (715) 822-5421

In most parts of the Northern Region, deer hunting opportunities are excellent. Most of the mid-north remains in Zone T status, while the western and eastern parts of the region are back in the conventional buck plus antlerless quota system. The northernmost tier of Wisconsin's counties experienced a hard winter, but even in those places deer remain in good numbers. Some lower reproduction is expected in those units. Many of the conventional season units will have bonus permits available. The nine-day gun season falls early on the calendar in 2000 and may catch the latter part of the rut. The year classes from the "easy" winter years of 1998 and 1999 are now two- and three-year-olds, so there is some potential to find bucks of these ages.

Hunters need to take note on the changes to DMUs one and seven. A metro unit has been added to DMU1 (unit 1M) and the boundaries around DMU 7 have shrunk to include the only the Bad River Indian Reservation (boundaries do not follow roads). Hunters that have hunted in the past around DMU 7 may now be a part of DMUs 6 or 28.

West Central Region

Contact: Mike Gappa, regional wildlife biologist (715) 839-3774

This region will have a majority of its units in the Zone T framework for 2000. Ample bonus permits are available for those DMUs that will have a traditional season framework to assure that an adequate antlerless harvest continues.

Winter had very little impact on the herd in this part of the state and it's anticipated that this region's farmland units will go into the hunt with about as many deer as last year. In the central forest, all units are above population goals and with this year's excellent fawn crop wildlife managers anticipate a total harvest of around 150,000 deer.

(more)

Northeast Region

Contact: Tom Bahti, regional wildlife biologist (920) 492-5827

The Northeast Region (NER) reports lots of deer...north to south and east to west. All deer management units except 49B and 50 are above prescribed management population goals. Private land units in east central Wisconsin have some of the highest deer densities in Wisconsin. With the exception of DMU 64 in Manitowoc and Calumet Counties, and a block of units in northern Oconto and Marinette Counties (44, 45, 49A, 49B & 50), the entire region is included in the Zone T season framework. Last winter's conditions in the northeast were in the mild to moderate range and had little effect on deer populations.

Southeast Region

Contact: Tami Ryan, regional wildlife biologist (414) 263-8710

Deer populations are highly variable in this part of the state due to the variety of habitat conditions and hunting pressure. It does not appear that the heavy snows of December and January had any effect on the local deer population and there are abundant deer and deer sign on public and private lands in Racine and Kenosha Counties. Many opportunities for quality hunting can be found for deer on both public and private lands, but preseason scouting and permission from landowners is critical. Hunters should always check with local township and village offices to see if there are any firearm or bow ordinances.

This year, deer hunters in Manitowoc, Calumet, Fond du Lac, Dodge, and especially Sheboygan, Washington, and Ozaukee County need to be aware of boundary changes affecting deer management units 69A, 69B and 77M.

Hunting in Unit 77D (Loew Lake Unit) is open for archery deer, waterfowl and small game hunting and for muzzleloader deer hunters who received a Unit 77D hunter's choice permit. Zone T permits are not valid this year on the Loew Lake Unit for archery or muzzleloader deer hunting. Check with the Pike Lake DNR office for local rules, maps and restrictions (414) 670-3400.

South Central Region

Contact: Alan Crossley, regional wildlife biologist (608-275-3242)

Although there are fewer units in Zone T this year than last in the South Central Region (SCR), there are not necessarily fewer deer. In most cases units that are not in Zone T will have an abundance of antlerless permits available. The one exception will be in unit 68B where there will probably not be enough antlerless permits to go around. Winter conditions in the SCR although seemingly harsh in December, were still relatively mild overall and little effect from the winter is expected. Half of the SCR units will head into the hunting season with as many or more deer in the field as last year, with only two deer management units at or near goal.

#

Wisconsin Deer Donation 2001

Hunters in Wisconsin again will have the opportunity to help manage a record white-tailed deer population and in the process donate venison to needy people across the state through Wisconsin Deer Donation 2001.

At no cost, hunters can donate additional deer that they harvest through participating venison-processing facilities in Wisconsin. The venison is then processed and distributed at no cost to needy people across the state.

The program benefits all involved—hunters help manage Wisconsin's deer herd by harvesting additional antlerless deer, and needy families receive high quality nutritious meat.

The venison donation program is funded by Wisconsin's Wildlife Damage Program, which is supported by hunter dollars. Wisconsin Deer Donation 2001 is again being operated in cooperation with Hunt for the Hungry, Hunters Against Hunger, County Land Conservation Departments, the U.S. Department of Agriculture-Wildlife Services, and other organizations and volunteers across the state.

Where can hunters donate deer?

Most counties will again be eligible to participate in Wisconsin Deer Donation 2001 because of the large number of Zone T deer management units. Only 16 counties currently **are not** eligible to participate in Wisconsin Deer Donation 2001, because they do not have a significant portion of their area in a Zone T deer management unit: Burnett, Calumet, Crawford, Dodge, Florence, Grant, Green, Jackson, Jefferson, Lafayette, Manitowoc, Polk, Richland, Rock, Walworth, and Washburn.

A list of participating processors can be found on the Department of Natural Resources website <http://www.dnr.state.wi.us/org/land/wildlife/damage/donation>.

How can hunters participate?

Hunters need only do six simple things to participate in the Wisconsin Deer Donation program:

1. Legally harvest a deer during any hunting season before Dec. 31st
2. Field dress the deer
3. Register the deer at a Wisconsin DNR registration station
4. Call a participating venison processing facility to verify that the processor has space to accept the hunter's deer
5. Drop the deer off at the participating processing facility, during regular business hours, by Dec. 31st
6. Sign a simple log-in sheet at the processing facility to verify their donation. (Hunters must donate the entire deer to receive the processing costs for free.)

The processors and pantries take it from there, processing the donated venison and distributing it to needy people across Wisconsin.

How many deer were donated in 2000?

Last year, hunters donated approximately 7,765 deer across Wisconsin, resulting in over 350,000 pounds of venison distributed to needy families around the state! Many thanks to all of the hunters, volunteers, processors, and food pantries who helped make the program a success in 2000. We hope that with your help, we'll be able to provide venison to even more needy people in Wisconsin this year.

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Clam Lake Elk Herd Status

The Clam Lake herd continues to grow. At present, biologist Laine Stowell estimates the population at about 90 animals, including spring 2001 calves.

“Black bear appear to be the most serious predator of newborn calves,” says Stowell. “Our best guess is that 22 of the 30 calves estimated being born this June will survive the focused bear predation period. In addition to this year’s calves, we estimate that there are approximately 40 sub-adult and adult cows, 20 bulls, and about 10 yearlings.”

“The current number (23) of elk with working radio collars is making it more difficult to accurately monitor calving,” says Stowell. “A new portable elk trap donated by Dave Bahl of Weldall Corp. and Safari Club International will greatly improve our ability to capture and collar elk. With more collared animals we’ll be better able to estimate numbers, track mortality and reproduction.”

Currently, the Department of Natural Resources is cooperating on two Clam Lake elk research projects. One is comprised of researchers from the UW-Madison, Univ. of Guelph-Ontario, and Univ. of Alberta-Edmonton. This group has a National Science Foundation grant to investigate elk dispersal biology and develop a continental scale population model.

DNR is a direct partner with UW-Steven’s Point on an elk study investigating predation of elk by wolves and bears. There exist some six different wolf packs in the Clam Lake Elk herd vicinity that DNR is monitoring and eleven collared black bear sows within the core elk range.

In April, the Department of Natural Resources published a draft management plan and environmental assessment for the establishment of a central forest elk herd with in the Black River State Forest and Jackson County Forest. The plan was presented to the public for comment in a series of open houses. Comments and concerns expressed at the meetings are being addressed before a final draft is presented to the Natural Resources Board.

The plan calls for release of 35 animals and a population goal of 2 elk per square mile within a 70-square mile core range area. The herd would be allowed to increase naturally without additional stocking.

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT: Laine Stowell (Clam Lake Herd) 715-634-9658 or
 Michell Kastner (Central Forest Herd proposal) 715.284.1403

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BLACK BEAR

Season Dates

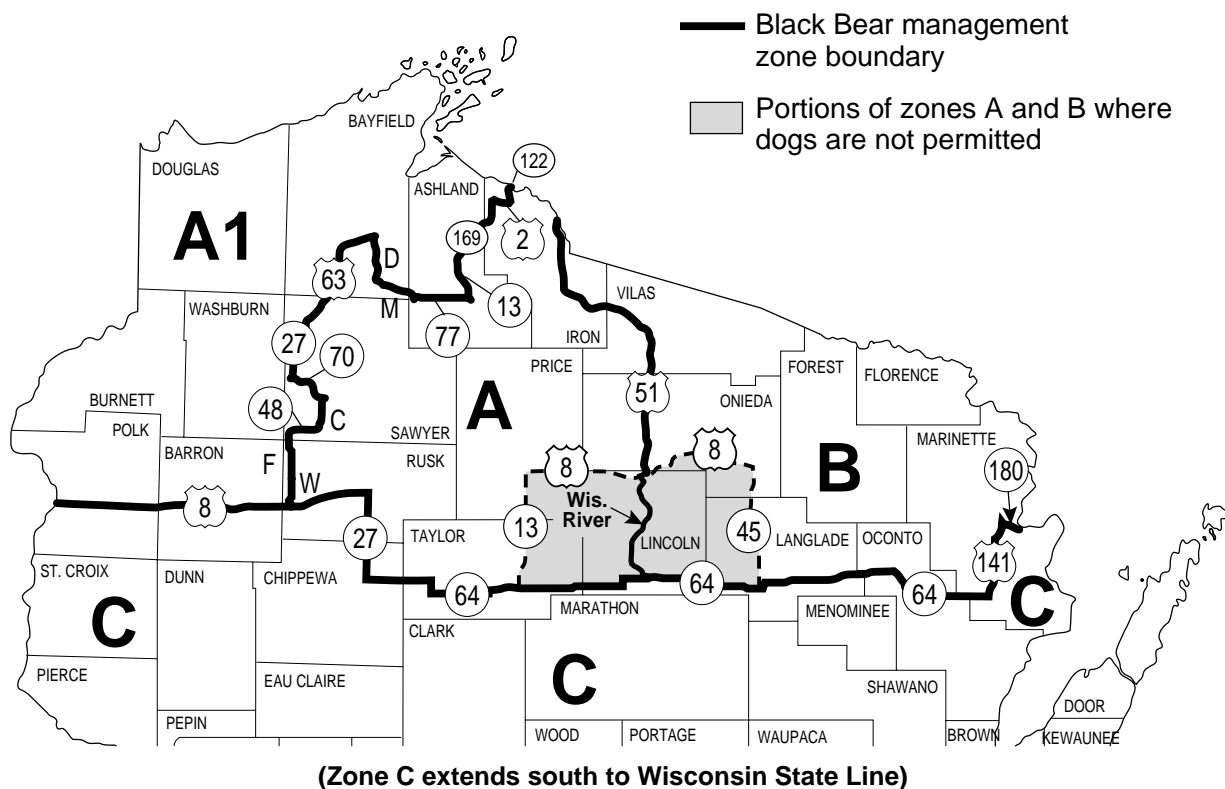
The 2001 fall hunting season begins Sept. 5 with hound hunters going first.

In Zone C and portions of Zone A & B where dogs **are not** permitted

- Sept. 5 - Oct. 9

In Zone A1 and portions of Zone A & B where dogs **are** permitted)

- Sept. 5 - Sept. 11 with aid of dogs
- Sept. 12 - Oct. 2 with aid of dogs, with aid of bait, with other methods
- Oct. 3 - Oct. 9: with aid of bait, with other methods not utilizing dogs



The 2001 Wisconsin black bear population is estimated at 13,500 animals with bear continuing to increase their range into many new areas of the state. It is now not uncommon to hear of bear sightings in Wisconsin's southern tier of counties, where past occurrences of bear were an extremely rare event.

In 2001 the Department has issued 5,580 harvest permits with an expected harvest of around 2,650 bear. The applicant pool for the harvest permits has risen steadily over the years until 2000 and 2001, where there appears to be a slight leveling of applicants at around 53,000. The legislatively set black bear population goal is 10,900. Last year, hunters harvested 3,075 bear with the highest harvests occurring in Bayfield, Price, and Sawyer counties.

Northern Region

Contact: Dave Evenson, regional wildlife biologist, (715) 822-5421

Over the past several years bear populations have been above the biological goals set for in the northwest and mid-north and in some areas complaints of nuisance bears have increased. Permit levels were raised, and bear numbers are down somewhat, although still above goal.

This year, permits have been lowered a bit, to soften the landing as populations near the goals. In the northeast bear numbers and permits have remained fairly constant. As of early summer bear nuisance and agricultural complaints are low. Natural foods may be a big part of this, plus having a few less bears. If frosts hold off it appears we should have a very good blueberry crop. One sometimes overlooked place for bear hunting is along the southern borders of the northern zones. Hunters often drive through this country on their way “up north”. It’s a bit more work to locate these bears, since they are in fewer numbers and often on private land. This territory can produce some large bruins however, since these populations are not hunted as hard as others and they usually have an excellent food base.

West Central Region

Contact: Mike Gappa, regional wildlife biologist, (715) 839-3774

The West Central Region’s (WCR) bear population is growing and healthy. The abundance of natural fall foods last year allowed the bears to go into the winter in good shape. Winter den surveys showed good, healthy litters and above average weights for denning bears. After two years of abundant natural foods (primarily acorns), natural foods may not be as abundant this year most likely making bears more dependent on bait.

Of the state’s four bear management zones, the West Central Region falls mostly in zone C. Only the northeast corner of Chippewa County is in zone A. Zone C is a bait only hunting zone –NO DOGS - and the season this year runs from Sept.5 to Oct. 9. The counties in the West Central Region that traditionally produce the most bears are Marathon, Chippewa and Clark.

There will be 715 harvest permits issued for Zone C this year, with an anticipated harvest of 250 bears. In 2000, 228 bears were harvested with 645 permits for a hunter success rate of 35 percent.

Northeast Region

Contact: Tom Bahti, regional wildlife biologist, (920) 492-5827

In the zone B portion of the Northeast Region, the bear population is comparable to last year, with the strong possibility that it has inched up a bit. Wildlife staff have received many reports of small bears. Two consecutive years of excellent acorn crops have contributed to good production and survival.

The bear population in the zone C portion of the Northeast Region is growing and expanding. Good huntable populations exist in eastern Marinette County, central Oconto County and western Shawano County. We have routine reports of bears in southern Oconto county, northern Brown county and as far south as Waushara County.

For more information contact Matt McKay at (608)-261-7588

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Fall furbearer forecasts

Furbearer populations in Wisconsin are healthy and doing well! With the fall harvest season soon upon us, people are making plans and inquiring about what they can expect. “From photographers, to wild rice harvesters, to mushroom pickers, or just sightseers - everyone is interested in their fall prospects”, says John Olson, Furbearer Specialist for the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR)

In a nutshell, furbearer populations are doing very well and in some cases have become challenges due to high numbers. The more normal winter last year did improve hunting success, but did not impact overall populations. However, severe spring and early summer weather may have an effect on furbearers and other wildlife.

Raccoon

Season dates

- Oct. 20 – Jan. 31, 2002 (statewide with exception of Mississippi River zone)
- Mississippi River zone: The day after duck season closes or the second Monday in Nov., whichever comes first – Jan. 31.

Raccoon populations are large with the highest densities in the southern one-half of the state. Raccoons are found in a wide variety of habitats both rural and urban. Those areas close to a wetland or farmland mosaic have some of the highest populations, with the expansive northern forests being on the lower end of the spectrum.

Tami Ryan, regional wildlife biologist in southeastern Wisconsin, reports that “raccoons are very abundant throughout the southeast - often to nuisance levels.” Dave Matheys, wildlife biologist for Vernon County in southwestern Wisconsin reports that “raccoon are super abundant providing excellent opportunities for beginning trappers and hunters to hone their skills.”

According to Olson, this year will be a good one to train that young dog or ask permission to trap on new lands. This is a species where landowner permission to hunt or trap is normally not a problem, but Olson says be sure to give yourself ample time to contact landowners and learn from them where best to focus your attention.

Mike Gappa, regional wildlife specialist from Eau Claire, urges trappers and hunters to, “get permission from the landowner well in advance. Now is not too early to start asking permission.”

Currently there are widespread problems with Canine Distemper Virus (CDV) in raccoons. “We are seeing significant mortalities in our raccoon populations, whether farm, urban, or woodland areas” says Kerry Beheler, Department of Natural Resources (DNR) wildlife health specialist. Ms. Beheler urges everyone to, “take special care with abnormal acting raccoons, because CDV mimics those of rabies, which is a viral disease fatal to humans and other mammals.”

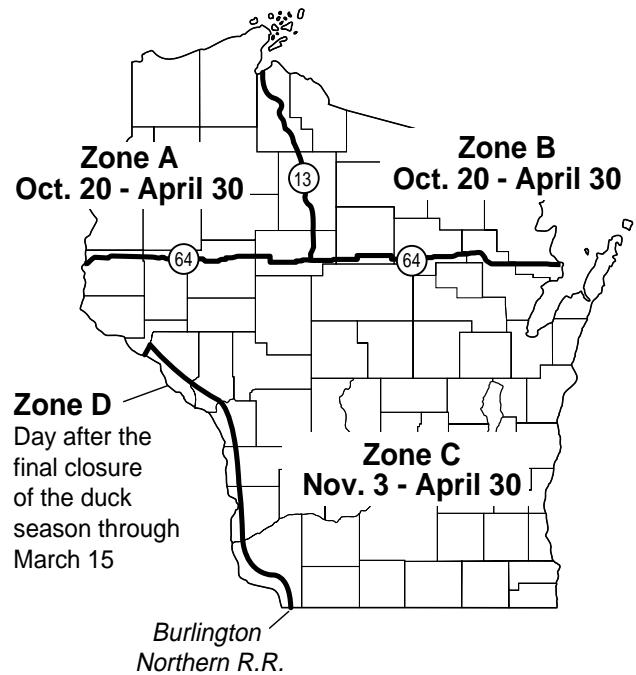
Beaver

Season Dates (trapping only)

- Oct. 20 – April 30 (Zone A – Northwest)
- Oct. 20 – April 30 (Zone B – Northeast)
- Nov. 3 – April 30 (Zone C – South)
- Day after duck season close – March 15 (Zone D – Mississippi River)

Interest in this furbearer tapered off slightly at the end of the last season, but current fur prices should keep interest strong through the 2001-2002 season. Beaver numbers in southern Wisconsin appear to be stable to increasing. Intensive aerial surveys conducted every three years in northern beaver management zones indicate a stable population of approximately 45,000 beaver in northwestern Wisconsin, known as zone A. In northeastern Wisconsin (zone B), where more intensive management programs exist, department biologists estimate the population at approximately 23,000 beavers. Bruce Kohn, a wildlife research specialist from Rhinelander, estimates the statewide beaver population estimate at around 90,000 animals. Aerial counts are scheduled for this October.

Although longer seasons have helped to reduce beaver numbers as planned, lower fur prices could lead to a gradual population increase throughout the state. Since 1996 beaver populations have not shown any signs of ill health from density-dependent wetland diseases such as botulism or tularemia.

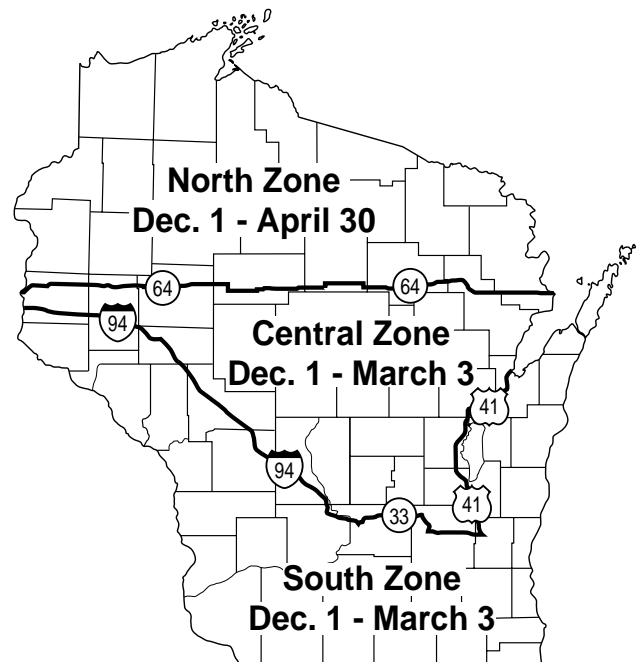


Otter

Season Dates (trapping only)

- Dec. 1 – April 30 (north zone)
- Dec. 1 – March 3 (central zone)
- Dec. 1 – March 3 (south zone)
- Anyone interested in trapping otter must apply by September 10, 2001.

Current statewide otter populations are stable at approximately 14,000 animals. Although a majority of the population is found in the north, otter numbers in central and southern Wisconsin appear to be increasing. They are now present in many of our major river systems of the southwest, namely the Kickapoo, Black, Mississippi and Wisconsin rivers and tributaries. Harvest quotas are similar to last year.



“A person can expect to receive at least one permit and possibly additional permit(s) depending upon the number of applicants in the zone of choice,” according to Lesa Skuldt, DNR assistant furbearer biologist.”

The otter season is highly regulated, and offers one of the latest opportunities to harvest wildlife in Wisconsin, with a statewide opening date of Dec. 1, and continuing until March 3, 2002 in the Central and South Zones, and April 30 in the North Zone.

Factors that impact beaver populations have similar affects on otter as they share similar habitats but have virtually no overlap in food preference. Beavers are herbivores that prefer the inner bark of aspen, willow and cottonwood for food, and their branches for construction of dams and lodges. Otters prefer other animals for food, mainly small fish, crayfish, and amphibians.

Otter, like many of our other furbearers are associated with and dependent on clean, productive rivers, lakes and streams.

Fisher

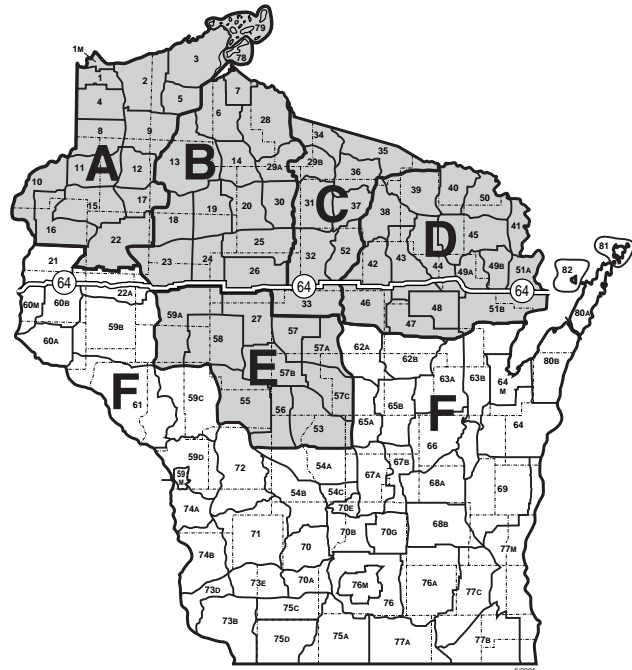
Season Dates

- Nov. 1 – Dec. 31 (Zones A,B,C,D,E – no trapping in Zone F for 2001)
- Application deadline, September 10

Fisher populations are at or slightly above population management goals in all trapping zones in 2001. The estimated statewide population is 10,800 animals according to DNR furbearer specialist, John Olson. Populations have rebuilt strongly over the past two seasons following an unexpectedly high harvest in 1997 and is at or over the goal of one fisher per four square miles of fisher range in zones A,B,C,D and E. Zone F, which covers most of the southern half of the state, does not have a harvest season at this time but biologists are closely watching track surveys, nuisance reports and trapper reports for signs of fisher populations in this zone. Olson says populations are growing in the southern zone and that it may not be too long before a harvest season is created.

Strong interest in fisher by tribal and state trappers has resulted in more applicants than permits, especially in zone A in northwestern Wisconsin. This year, 6,680 permits are available and the harvest goal is 1,405. This represents a slight increase in permit numbers over the 00-01 season. The number applications for a zone will determine whether a trapper will receive a permit or an additional preference point.

As with bobcat and otter, fisher must be tagged at the point of harvest and registered at a DNR facility. At that time, the fisher carcass or skull is collected from the trapper or hunter. From registration and carcass collections wildlife biologists are able to gather important management information such as harvest pressure, overall age structure of the population, reproductive age, and previous litter sizes.

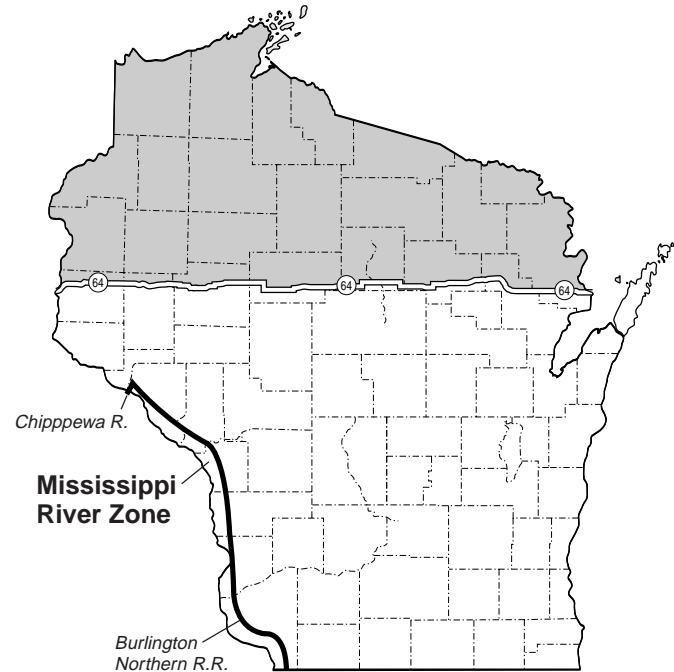


Bobcat

Season Dates

- Oct. 20 – Dec. 31 (North of Highway 64 only)
- Application deadline, September 10

Bobcat populations are stable to increasing across forests of northern Wisconsin. “Bobcat sign is as abundant as I’ve ever seen around Iron County, and public observations of bobcat are up considerably”, according to wildlife biologist Bruce Bacon of Mercer, Wisconsin. There is also an increase in bobcat sightings in southern and southwestern portions of the state.



Bobcat populations are increasing in other midwestern states as well with dramatic increases experienced in portions of Kansas, Nebraska, Illinois and Missouri. The exact reason for the increases in Wisconsin are not fully understood, says John Olson, DNR furbearer specialist, but generally improving habitat conditions are thought to be playing a role.

“Wisconsin is on the northern edge of bobcat range, but with relatively good habitat, mild winters and conservative management, we have a population of approximately 2,400 animals,” says Olson.

Annual harvests average around 220 with a high last year of 279. As with fisher and otter, bobcat must be tagged at the point of harvest and registered at a DNR facility. At that time, the bobcat carcass (and in some years otter and fisher as well), is collected from the trapper or hunter. From registration and carcass collections wildlife biologists are able to gather important management information such as harvest pressure, overall age structure of the population, reproductive age, and previous litter sizes.

Permit numbers are limited and under the preference system, a trapper applying each year should receive a harvest tag at least every four years. As with fisher and otter, the application deadline for bobcat is September 10, 2001.

Coyote and Fox

Season

- Oct. 20 – Feb. 15, 2002
(North of Highway 64, trapping only)
- Oct. 27 – Feb. 15, 2002
(South of Highway 64)

Coyote numbers have expanded throughout southern and western portions of the state and are doing well elsewhere, with the exception of established gray wolf territories.

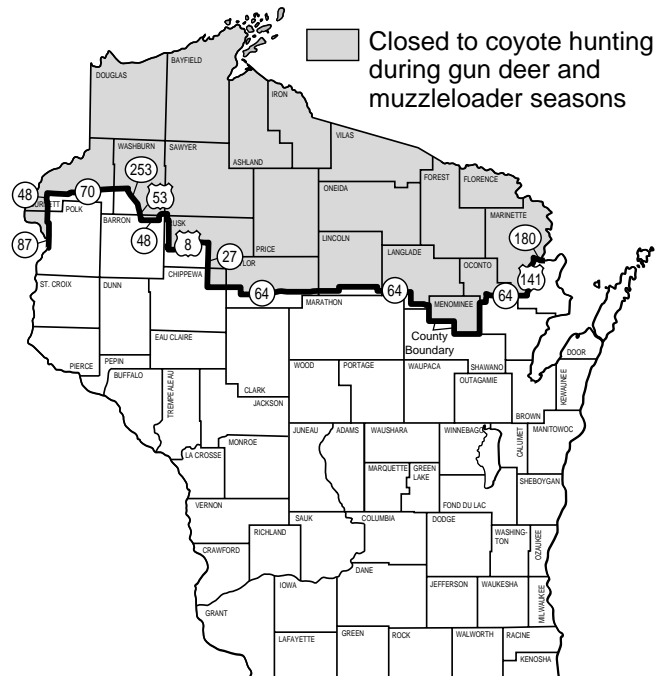
Wildlife biologist Andy Nelson reports,

“coyotes are doing very well around the Horicon Marsh area and at this time they are the most abundant wild canine around here.”

Red fox numbers have increased across many areas of the north but mange and coyote competition are impacting numbers in western and southern portions of the state. Paul Samerdyke, wildlife biologist in northeastern Wisconsin states that, “I’ve seen and had more reports of healthy red fox and now healthy red fox litters than in past years.”

Gray fox have fewer cases of mange and appear to be doing well in southern and central Wisconsin. North of US Highway 64, the trapping season for fox and coyote opens with bobcat on Oct. 20, South of Highway 64 the fox and coyote trapping seasons open on Oct. 27th. Hunting of coyote is open statewide, year round with the exception of some northern areas closed during the deer firearm seasons. Fox hunting opens with the respective trapping seasons.

One noteworthy item is the gradual increase and expansion of the gray wolf across northern and west-central portions of the state. According to Adrian Wydeven, nongame mammalogist for the DNR: “A gradual increase in gray wolf populations across the north, coupled with noteworthy movements of individual animals into southern Wisconsin makes observations of these wild and wonderful canines a real possibility. We encourage the public to report their observations, especially hunters and trappers who are intimately familiar with their area of the state.”



Muskrat and Mink

Season Dates

Zone	Mink	Muskrat
Northern	Oct. 20 – Dec. 31)	Oct. 20 – Feb. 28
Central	Oct. 27 – Dec. 31	Oct. 27 – Feb. 28
Winnebago	Oct. 27 – March 15	Oct. 27 – March 15
Mississippi	Jan. 15*	Feb. 28*
Southern	Nov. 3 – Dec. 31	Nov. 3 – Feb. 28

* Begins the day after duck season closes or the second Monday in Nov., whichever comes first

Mink populations appear to be doing well throughout most of the state however, spring and early summer flooding negatively affected muskrat reproduction in several locales across the state.

According to Dave Linderud, wildlife biologist in Alma, “Extended high water on the Mississippi River this spring and early summer increased mortality of many animals and reduced the number of litters of muskrat, mink, and other wildlife that use bottom land hardwoods.”

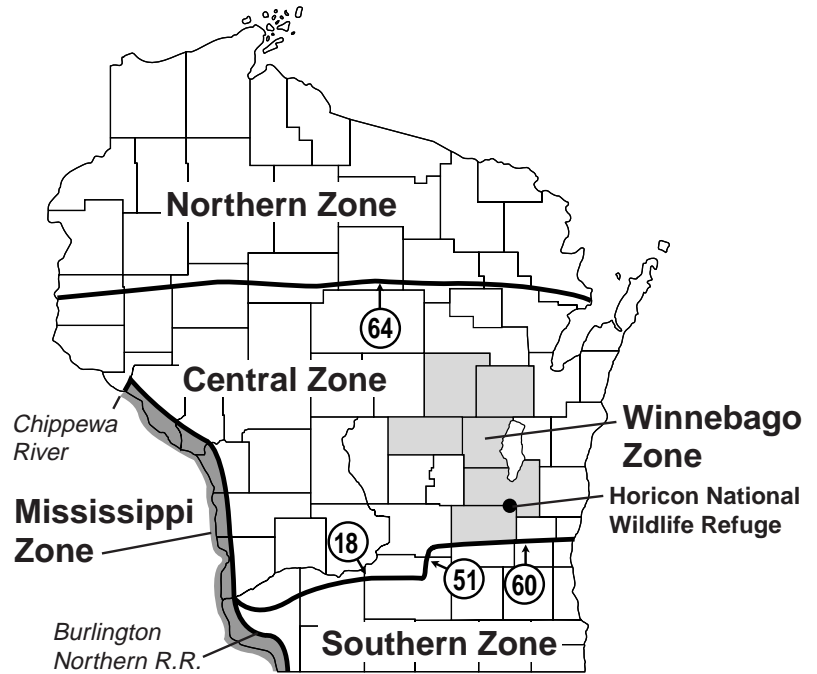
In east-central Wisconsin, including Calumet, Brown and Outagamie counties, wildlife biologist Richard Nikolai reports that muskrat populations continue to stay somewhat depressed except for isolated spots near the Brillion Wildlife Area where populations remain normal to slightly above.

With these exceptions, opportunities to trap these species are good to excellent on a statewide basis.

Season Changes

The Mississippi River Zone will be into the third year of a successful change in opening dates. In an effort to allow open-water trapping, many wildlife managers, hunters, trappers and representatives from a variety of organizations developed a new season that begins the second Monday of November (Nov. 12 for 2001), or the day after the duck season ends, whichever occurs first. This earlier opener creates a perfect opportunity for experienced trappers to invite a friend or two along on the traplines and show them the beauty and hard work that’s part of this overall, intense outdoor experience.

Trapping hours will change slightly, allowing trappers more flexibility in tending traps earlier in the day. New trap hours for the 2001-2002 season will be from 4 AM to 8 PM Central Standard Time, and 5 AM to 9 PM Daylight Standard Time.



Additional Responsibilities

Some villages, cities, and towns throughout the state, primarily in urban areas, require special permits and/or have ordinances that restrict trapping, or the discharge of firearms or bows. Check with local town or village offices before your hunt or trap to see if special rules apply! A quality hunting or trapping experience can be found on both public and private lands. Preseason scouting and permission seeking from landowners is critical.

For more information contact: John Olson, Furbearer Specialist, Box 220, Park Falls, WI 54552, (715) 762-3204, or Lesa Skuldt, Assistant Furbearer Specialist, at (608)261-6452.

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Best Management Practices and trapping information

In a progressive effort to improve the science of furbearer management, the State of Wisconsin, Wisconsin Trappers Association, Wisconsin Conservation Congress and individual trappers have been actively involved in an international effort to develop Best Management Practices for Trapping. This is the largest collective trap research effort ever undertaken anywhere in the world, with the final product being information and suggestions that each state and their trappers can use to improve on animal welfare and trapping in general. Such progressive advances, through science, is the future of resource management in Wisconsin and throughout the United States, where our natural resources belong to all of us.

If you would like to learn more about furbearers, trapping history, responsibilities and ethics of the modern- day trapper, consider taking the trapper education course offered by the department and taught by dedicated volunteer instructors of the Wisconsin Trappers Association. If you are interested in becoming a trapper, completion of this 12-hour course is mandatory. To locate a current class near you, contact your local DNR office or check the DNR Internet home page at www.dnr.state.wi.us.

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Wisconsin wolf population holds steady despite mange

Although mange, a contagious skin disease, caused the deaths of some Wisconsin wolves this year, the state's wolf population is holding steady, according to state wildlife officials monitoring the population. A total of 251 wolves were counted in the state as of April, according to Adrian Wydeven, mammalian ecologist with the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources at Park Falls. This represents the wolf population prior to the birth of pups in mid April.

Wydeven, who heads the state's wolf recovery and management program, said that the total count of wolves is 251 to 253 statewide, with 243 to 244 of the wolves living outside of Indian Reservations. The Wisconsin DNR lists the wolves as threatened and federal government classifies them as an endangered species.

Wisconsin's wolf management plan allows for removing wolves from the state endangered and threatened species list once the population exceeds 250 outside of Indian reservations. The tribes and the federal government manage wolves living on tribal lands. Because the population level is below 250 outside reservation lands, removing the wolf from the state endangered and threatened species list must wait at least one more year. Once removed from the state list, wolves would be classified as a protected nongame wildlife species, according to the Wisconsin Wolf Management Plan.

"Wolves continue to occur in the same general areas of northern Wisconsin and west-central Wisconsin as in the past," Wydeven said.

Wolves from Minnesota crossed into Wisconsin in the mid 1970s, and established pack territories in northern Wisconsin and in the state's Central Forest area. Only one pack continues to occur in northeast Wisconsin. A pack of two wolves occurred in the Nicolet National Forest in Forest County. Although that pair of wolves had pups last summer, apparently none survived the winter, according to Wydeven.

He said the largest pack in Wisconsin was the Chippewa River pack, with nine wolves in east Ashland County, north of the Flambeau Flowage.

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT: Adrian Wydeven - (715) 762-4684

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Upland Game Hunting Season Forecasts

Ring-necked Pheasant

Season dates

- Oct. 20, noon – Dec. 31

Preliminary results from pheasant crowing counts this year indicate a 25 percent decrease from 2000 in wild pheasant populations statewide and cold June temperatures and wet weather are expected to cause a decrease in productivity this year. Brood survey information will not be available until late summer.

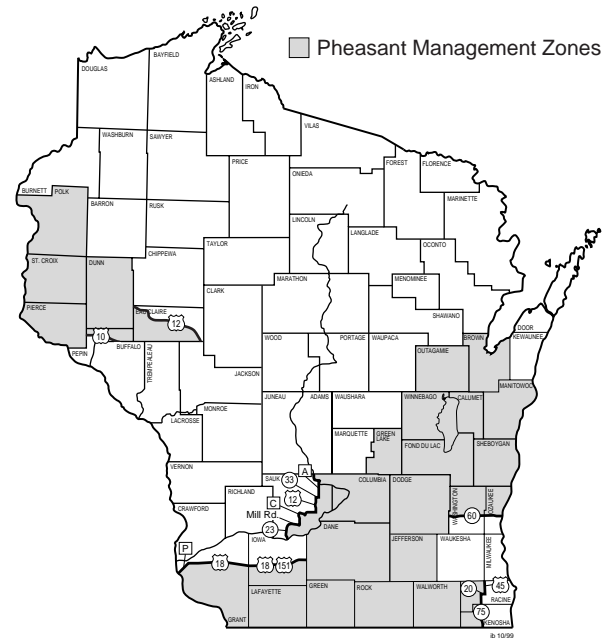
Offsetting this downswing in natural recruitment, the Department of Natural Resources again will stock approximately 72 public hunting grounds with 55,000 pheasants to provide hunting opportunities. An additional 45,000 roosters will be released primarily on private lands open for public hunting by clubs cooperating in the Day Old Chick Program. Overall, hunting will likely be poorer than last year.

Hunters can maximize their chances of success by looking for areas within the pheasant management counties that contain adequate winter cover (cattail and shrub-carr marshes, and thick switch grass fields) and have more than 15 percent of the landscape in idle grassland. These sites likely will have the highest pheasant densities.

In Wisconsin, research has shown that wetlands are one of the most important year-round cover types for pheasants. Over the long-term throughout the Midwest, pheasant populations have shown a decline. Changes in pheasant populations have coincided with changing agriculture and land use patterns. Pheasants once relied on small grain and hay fields for nesting and brood rearing. These areas are now being replaced with larger row crops of corn and soybeans. It will be important for hunters to identify areas with high quality habitat and concentrate hunting efforts in that area.

Please check the special pheasant hunting regulations and the general hunting regulations for information on the counties in which a pheasant stamp is required and which public hunting grounds have a 2 p.m. closure and/or allow hen pheasant hunting. Stocking and hunting hen pheasants on certain properties increases the effective use of surplus hen chicks produced by the State Game Farm and provides additional pheasant hunting opportunities. Hen hunting properties are selected because they have no wild hens on or near them. It is illegal to shoot hen pheasants anywhere else in Wisconsin, except on licensed game farms. Such shooting of wild hens would harm Wisconsin's wild pheasant population.

A pheasant stamp is required to hunt pheasants in pheasant management zones. Pheasant hunting opens statewide. From Oct. 20-21, the daily bag limit is one cock and possession limit is two. For the remainder of the season the daily bag limit is 2 cocks and the possession limit is 4. Some public hunting grounds have both hen and cock pheasant hunting (requires free permits and tags) and/or 2 p.m. closure times. See the Special Pheasant pamphlet for details.



Wild Turkey

Season Dates

- Oct. 13 – Nov. 11
- Fall license application deadline: August 10
- Spring license application deadline: Dec. 10

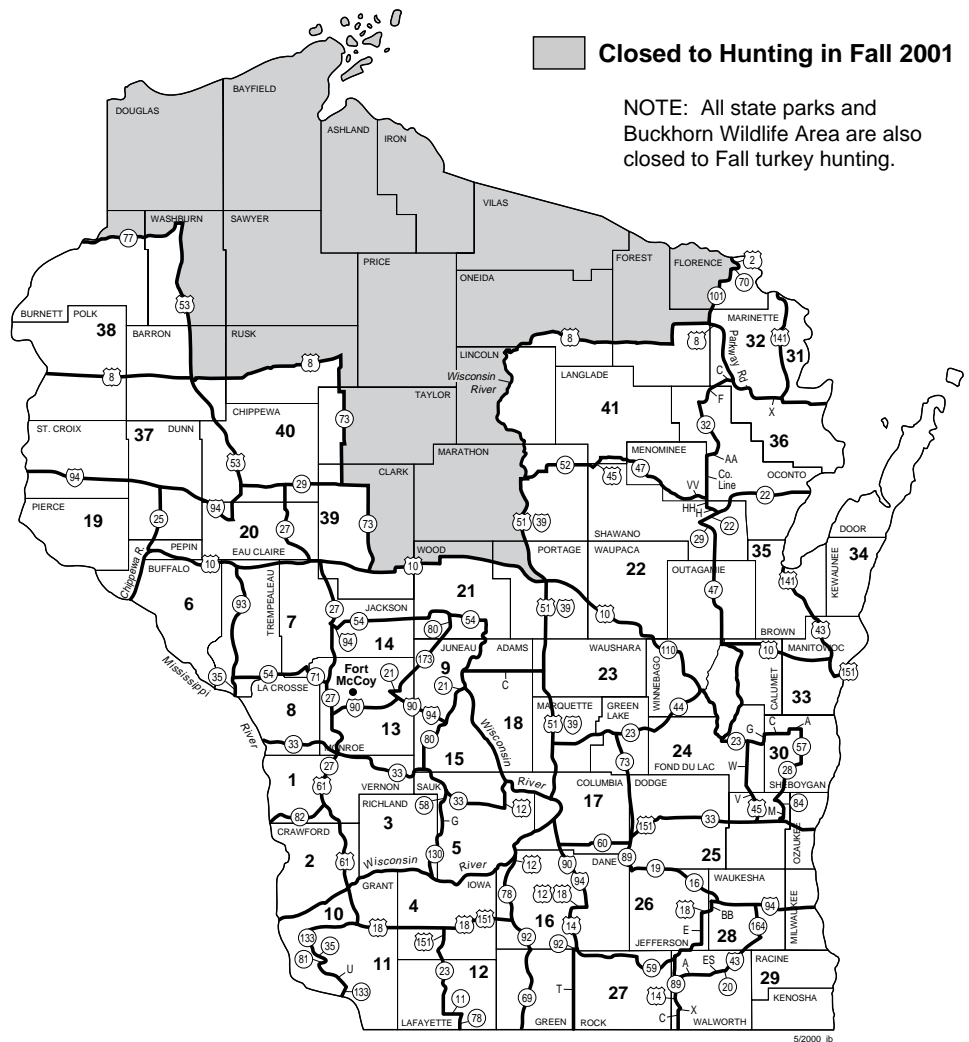
The Wisconsin turkey population now extends well into the northern part of the state. Expansion is occurring in part due to statewide mild winters, available habitat and expanded habitat development and improvement. Reports from all regions of the state indicate that production may have been hurt a little due to repeated June rains and cool temperatures this year. Turkey hunting will be a little more difficult this year due to the expected poor productivity. In past years, 50 percent of the fall harvest has been juveniles.

This fall, 71,600 permits are available; this is an increase over last year's fall permit allotment of 68,600. The statewide spring 2001 harvest reached a record high of 39, 211 turkeys.

During the fall turkeys spend more than 90 percent of the daylight hours in hardwood habitats. Both brood flocks and adult male flocks make extensive use of areas dominated by oak and hickory. Turkey hunters should monitor the acorn crop in the area they hunt, as the success or failure of acorns will determine where turkeys will be feeding. In years of poor acorn production, turkeys spend proportionately more time in cornfields.

Most turkey hunting occurs on private land so it is important to keep landowner relationships a high priority. Landowners in Wisconsin are usually willing to allow hunters to use their land as long as they ask politely for permission to do so.

Bag limit is one turkey of any age or sex per hunting approval notice.



Ruffed Grouse

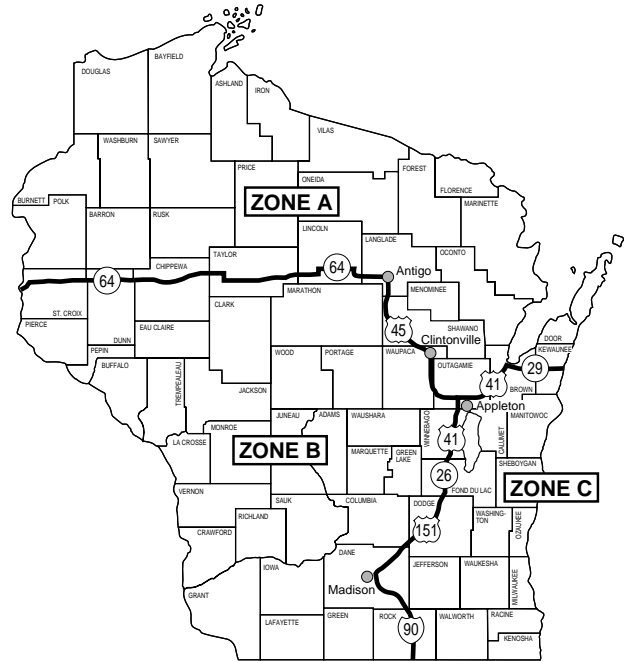
Season dates

- September 15 – Dec. 31 (Northern zone)
- September 15 – Jan. 31 (Western zone)
- Oct. 20 – Dec. 8 (Eastern zone)

The 2001 ruffed grouse spring drumming survey shows a 23 percent decrease in the number of drumming grouse heard compared to last year's survey. Central, northern, and southwestern Wisconsin regions all showed decreases while the southeastern region showed an increase. Due to cool and rainy weather during June, productivity is expected to be lower than past years. More brood information will be available in early September.

Wisconsin's ruffed grouse population exhibited an upward trend up to 1999 when it hit its peak. The population is now on the downward trend of its approximately 10-year cycle. Reduced grouse in the bag can be expected, but these are great years to scout new hunting areas. Hunters will not find uniformly high numbers of grouse across the landscape and will need to seek good habitat for ruffed grouse hunting this year. It's possible that good numbers of grouse may be found in pockets meaning hunters will have to move around for best success. Ruffed grouse use a variety of habitat types, but early successional forest types are most important when trying to find a good grouse hunting location.

The bag and possession limits are 5 and 10, respectively, in the northern and western zones and 2 and 4 in the eastern zone.



Sharp-tailed Grouse

Season Dates

- Oct. 20 – Nov. 11
- Application deadline: August 10

Sharp-tailed grouse dancing ground surveys indicate a decline in this year's population estimate. Scouting will be a necessity for hunters. Sharp-tailed grouse habitat is open savanna and brush prairie, a habitat that is found only in limited areas of Wisconsin.

Individual permits are required to hunt sharp-tailed grouse in Wisconsin. Permits are issued in certain Deer Management Units (DMUs) and the number of permits available is based on spring population surveys conducted by wildlife managers in April. The total number of permits available for the 2001 season is 630. Those units open in 2001 for sharp-tailed grouse hunting include Deer Management Units 2, 9 and 10.

Woodcock

Season Dates

- Sept. 22 – Nov. 5

American woodcock singing-ground data collected by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in 2001 indicates a 7 percent decrease from last year in the number of woodcocks heard displaying in Wisconsin. Long-term trends from this survey indicate a decreasing population and decreasing hunter success in Wisconsin and the central management unit, which Wisconsin is in. The cool, wet spring may have had an adverse effect on woodcock production this year.

The northern region of the state is where hunters will find the most woodcock hunting opportunities. Moist, loamy soils are preferred because a major component of the woodcock diet is earthworms. Woodcock, like ruffed grouse, prefer early successional northern forests composed primarily of young aspen, alder, and spruce along with tangly brush.

Because the woodcock is a migratory bird, woodcock populations and hunting limits are federally regulated. The typical peak woodcock migration occurs in the second or third week of October. Woodcock hunters must remember that they are required to be HIP (Harvest Information Program) certified and must carry proof of such certification when hunting. The bag limit is three per day with the possession limit set at six.

Rabbits

Season Dates

- Cottontail
 - Sept. 15 – Feb. 28 (Northern zone)
 - Oct. 20, noon – Feb. 28 (Southern zone)
- Jackrabbit
 - Oct. 20, noon – Nov. 15 (Statewide)

Good rabbit productivity this year will lead to good rabbit hunting opportunities throughout Wisconsin this fall. The best rabbit hunting areas may be in the west central part of the state where brushy fence rows and agriculture provide excellent rabbit habitat. The daily bag limit is three per day with the possession limit set at six.



Squirrel

Season Dates

- September 15 – Jan. 31

Wildlife managers indicate that squirrel production looks good across much of the state and squirrel-hunting opportunities should follow suit. In areas defoliated by the forest tent caterpillar acorn production appears to be low which will likely affect squirrel populations. In all other areas, squirrel numbers appear strong with spring productivity normal to above average. The daily bag limit is five and the possession limit is 10.

Bobwhite Quail

Season Dates

- Oct. 20, noon – Dec. 12

Relatively low numbers of quail can be found in some areas of south central and southwest Wisconsin. They prefer areas with a good mix of idle grassland, woods, woody fencerows, and row crops in close proximity. Last winter's deep, persistent snows likely produced lower than normal survival rates for quail. The quail daily bag and possession limits are five and ten, respectively.

Hungarian Partridge

Season Dates

- Oct. 20, noon – Dec. 31 (Closed in Clark, Marathon and Taylor Counties)

Hungarian partridge are found primarily in east central Wisconsin. They prefer areas with small farm field sizes, abundant strips of grass and shrubs separating farm fields, little woodland and standing corn over winter. Hungarian partridge have been relatively uncommon in recent years compared to past years. Daily bag limits and possession limits are three and six, respectively. The Hungarian partridge season is closed in Clark, Marathon and Taylor counties.

Crow

Season Dates

- September 15 – Nov. 15
- And, Jan. 18 – March 20

Crows present a relatively new hunting opportunity in Wisconsin. The daily bag and possession limits are 15 and 30, respectively.

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Migratory Game Birds

Ducks

Season dates

- Season Length: 60 days; canvasback 20 days
- Season Dates: Ducks (except canvasback), coots and mergansers: Statewide: Sept. 29 (noon) – Nov. 27 (no split). Canvasback: Statewide: Oct. 20 – Nov. 8.
- Shooting Hours: One-half hour before sunrise to sunset, except Sept. 29 when shooting opens at noon.
- Canvasback: Statewide: Oct. 20 – Nov. 8.
- Shooting Hours: One-half hour before sunrise to sunset.
- Harvest System:
 - Conventional Bag: Daily bag of 6 ducks to include not more than 4 mallards of which only 1 may be a hen, 1 black duck, 1 pintail, 2 redheads, 2 wood ducks and 3 scaup. During the period October 20 – November 8, the daily duck bag may include not more than 1 canvasback. In addition to the duck daily bag, a daily bag for mergansers is 5, to include not more than 1 hooded merganser. The possession limits are double the daily bag limits.
 - Coots: Daily bag: 10; Possession limit: 20.

Overall, duck hunters will probably experience an average duck season this fall including a shortened, 20-day, canvasback duck season due to low population numbers for that species.

Total duck numbers observed during the spring survey in Wisconsin put the population at 31 percent above the long-term average. This is a decline of 35 percent from 2000's record level. Mallard numbers were down about 60 percent from 2000 estimates and were at the long-term average. It should be noted that mallard numbers in 2000 increased 66 percent and total duck numbers 77 percent from 1999 levels, so the decline we experienced this year is not as significant as the numbers initially appear. The 2000 mallard estimate was higher than any estimate recorded prior to 1989.

Data on wetlands are mixed. Precipitation during the fall and winter was about normal statewide although different regions of the state experienced below normal to above normal precipitation. Fall and winter precipitation is important in filling wetland basins during the spring thaw. Spring precipitation (March – May) was 28 percent above normal statewide. Some areas (along Mississippi River and in northwestern Wisconsin) were flooded producing a negative effect on duck nesting. June wetland water levels were considered good statewide and provided excellent duck brood habitat in most of the state. A lack of rain in July resulted in deteriorating water levels and habitat conditions

Overall, the number of wetlands was up in all survey areas compared to last year. Comparing this number to the 28-year average, wetland numbers were down some in southern Wisconsin, but up in the north and southwest. Reports from field managers around the state in early July indicate that Wisconsin will probably experience average duck production statewide this year.

The boreal forest areas of western Ontario and northern Saskatchewan and Manitoba experienced good water conditions this spring. However, mallard numbers declined 42 percent in this region compared to last year and were 49 percent below the long-term average. Total duck numbers in this region also showed declines from last year (minus 23 percent) and the long-term averages (minus 25 percent). This region contributes substantial number of ducks to our fall flight.

“In regard to the canvasback season dates, they were set based on the average arrival time of adult male canvasbacks on the Mississippi River over a number of years,” explains Jon Bergquist, a waterfowl ecologist with the Department of Natural Resources.

“This timing was picked because typically, adult male canvasback ducks arrive before successful breeding females and their young of the year. This time frame for the hunt will focus the harvest on adult males, taking the pressure off breeding-age hens. The 20-day canvasback duck season will allow for some harvest opportunities and still keep the population on track toward spring 2002 population goals.”

Canada Geese

Season dates

Hunting Zone	Dates	Length	Bag limit
Horicon Zone			
Period 1	Sept. 17- 28 and Sept. 29 (noon) - Oct. 21	35 days	1/day*
Period 2	Oct. 1 - Nov. 4	35 days	1/day*
Period 3	Oct. 13 - Nov. 16	35 days	1/day*
Period 4	Nov.3 - Dec. 19	47 days	1/day*
Collins Zone			
Period 1	Sept. 17 - Sept. 28 and Sept.29 (noon) - 30	14 days	1/day*
Period 2	Oct. 1 - 14	14 days	1/day*
Period 3	Oct. 15 - 28	14 days	1/day*
Period 4	Oct. 29 - Nov. 16 and Nov. 26-30	24 days	1/day*
Exterior Zone			
North Part	Oct. 6.- Dec. 14	70 days **	1/day; 2/possession
South Part	Oct 6- Dec. 14	70 days **	1/day; 2/possession
Subzones managed as part of the Exterior Zone.			
Mississippi River	Oct. 13 - Dec. 21	70 days **	1/day; 2/possession
Rock Prairie	Oct. 6 - Dec. 14	70 days **	1/day; 2/possession
Brown County	Oct. 6 - Dec. 14	70 days **	1/day; 2/possession

*Some Horicon Zone hunters may receive an additional tag depending on the number of applications.

** 70 days is the maximum season length; season may close earlier by order of DNR secretary if harvest limit is reached early

The population of Canada geese nesting in Wisconsin continues to be in excellent condition. Department of Natural Resources biologists continue to monitor local nesting Canada goose populations during the breeding waterfowl survey. However, it's felt that the spring estimates are generally low because the survey is flown at a time when local Canada geese are tied to nest sites and difficult to observe from the air.

“The survey this year indicated that local Canada goose numbers were down from last year, but 62 percent above the long-term average,” said Jon Bergquist DNR waterfowl ecologist.

“Production for this population looks good statewide. However, it may be depressed along the Mississippi River and in portions of Northwestern Wisconsin where flooding in late April and early impacted nesting. We will again offer the statewide early September Canada goose season (Sept. 4 - 15) this year. A special Early September Canada Goose permit is required to participate in this hunt.”

The outlook for migrant geese this fall is somewhat confusing. The spring Mississippi Valley Population survey across the Hudson Bay and northwest James Bay lowlands in northern Ontario showed a slight decline (minus 5 percent) in the number of nests and a substantial decline (minus 83 percent) in the number of non-breeding birds.

Typically, non-breeders make up nearly 50 percent of the spring MVP population. The fall flight estimate is only half of what was predicted for last year.

“It’s possible the Exterior Zone Canada goose season will last 70 days but I expect that it will be closed sooner by order of the DNR Secretary,” says Bergquist. “Our harvest allotment is down 45 percent from last year and I think we’ll reach it quickly based on past years’ harvest trends.”

Canada goose hunters are also reminded that they may only apply and hunt in one of the Canada goose zones again this year.

Finally, all migratory game bird hunters including those that don’t hunt waterfowl, but do hunt doves or woodcock are reminded that they need to be certified under the Harvest Information Program (HIP) yearly in Wisconsin. This can be easily done when you purchase your hunting licenses.

Youth waterfowl hunt Sept. 15-16

A special youth waterfowl hunt will take place this year Sept. 15 and 16. The hunt is open to youth, 12- to 15-years of age. Youths must be hunter safety certified, HIP (harvest information program) registered and possess an Early **September Canada Goose** hunting permit to participate in this special hunt on Sept. 15. Hunting requirements change slightly on Sept. 16, the second day of the hunt, when youths must be hunter safety certified, HIP registered and possess a **Regular Season Goose** hunting permit. All other licensing requirements (small game hunting license, state and federal waterfowl stamps) are waived for youth participating in the Sept. 15 –16 hunt.

All hunters must be accompanied by an adult chaperone, age 18 years or older. The adult may not accompany more than two youth hunters. The adult may not hunt ducks either day but may hunt Canada geese on September 15th only.

Youth hunt bags and reporting requirements

Duck - Sept. 15 & 16. Daily bag limits for ducks, mergansers and coots are the same as for the regular hunt (including not more than 1 canvasback). Shooting hours are one-half hour before sunrise to sunset

Canada geese – Sept. 15. In subzone A, the daily bag is five; in subzone B, the daily bag is three. Adults may hunt Canada geese on Sept. 15. Canada geese taken on Sept. 15 must be reported within 48 hours of harvest by calling 1-800-994-6673 (toll free). Shooting hours are one-half hour before sunrise to sunset

Canada Geese – Sept. 16. The daily bag is one. Any time period permit for the Horicon and Collins zones will be valid for this day. Canada geese taken in the Horicon or Collins zones must be tagged with the youth’s regular season Canada goose tags. If the hunter is using an exterior permit, the harvest must be reported within 48 hours utilizing the exterior zone reporting system.

Shooting hours are one-half hour before sunrise to sunset. All other state and federal rules pertaining to duck and goose hunting apply.

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West Nile Virus expected to appear in Wisconsin in future***DNR and Division of Public Health have monitoring program in place***

State wildlife and human health officials agree that West Nile Virus (WNV), a mosquito-borne viral disease that infects birds, horses and humans will appear in Wisconsin and throughout North America in the near future.

The disease was first detected in the Western Hemisphere in the New York City area in 1999. Birds are the natural hosts for this virus. The virus has been detected in northern New York south to Florida and west to Ohio.

WNV can cause encephalitis, an infection of the brain and spinal cord. The virus is transmitted from infected birds to humans and other animals through the bite of an infected mosquito. In 1999 and 2000 there were 83 human cases including nine deaths reported in the U.S. People cannot get WNV from another person who has the disease.

In 2000, 65 horses from seven eastern states were diagnosed. However, wild birds have been most affected by this virus; thousands are estimated to have died in 1999 and 2000. In all, more than 80 native North American species of birds have been infected. Crows appear to be the most susceptible with bluejays, ravens and hawks also at risk. Signs in crows affected by WNV include weakness, lethargy, lack of response to human approach, and varying degrees of leg paralysis. Once they become infected, death is likely to occur in a short period of time.

Surveillance for sick and dead wild birds appears to be the most sensitive early detection system for the virus. During the 2000 WNV outbreak on the East Coast, WNV was detected in dead birds, primarily crows, before it was found by other surveillance methods such as identification of the virus in mosquitoes or identification of antibodies to WNV in sentinel chickens. Dead birds were most often found singly, not in mass die-offs in one place at one time. Because dead bird surveillance seems to be the best way to identify WNV in a new location, Wisconsin has developed a plan for testing dead birds for WNV, starting in the 2001 summer mosquito season.

West Nile virus bird surveillance in Wisconsin

In 2001, the Wisconsin Division of Public Health (DPH) in collaboration with the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) is initiating dead bird surveillance for West Nile Virus. The DPH and DNR are collecting information on sick or dead crows, blue jays, ravens, and hawks.

If you see sick or dead birds that fit these categories, please report your observations to your local DNR office or local Health Department. WNV cannot be transmitted through touching a dead bird. However, anyone handling dead wildlife should always wear rubber gloves or a plastic bag inverted over your hand.

The DNR will do WNV testing on birds that are not too decomposed. Indicators of suitable condition include no scavenging of the carcass, an intact body cavity, no maggot infestation or strong odor. Testing of dead birds may take up to three weeks and only WNV positive birds will be reported back to submitters.

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT: Kerry Beheler at (608) 267-6751

State's white-tailed deer test negative for TB, chronic wasting disease

All 400 of the wild white-tailed deer sampled during the Fall 2000 hunting season tested negative for both Bovine Tuberculosis and Chronic Wasting disease, as well as several other important deer pathogens, according to state wildlife health specialists. However, 8 percent of the deer did test positive for *Leptospira*, a water-borne bacteria affecting mammals.

There is little evidence that *Leptospira* infections have a significant impact on the health of deer, according to a report by Department of Natural Resources wildlife health specialists. Researchers have also not been able to document that wild deer play a substantial role in transmitting the disease to cattle.

(more)

Although deer are tested for a variety of diseases, state wildlife health specialists are primarily concerned that Bovine TB or Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) could potentially spread into Wisconsin's wild, free-ranging deer, said Julie Langenberg, a DNR wildlife veterinarian.

"Recent outbreaks of TB in Michigan and CWD in Colorado, Wyoming and Nebraska have had significant effects on deer health, as well as state economies," Langenberg said.

Langenberg said the goal for the 2001 deer hunting season is to test a minimum of 500 animals from representative and targeted areas of the state. This will be the third year that Wisconsin has tested deer shot by hunters for CWD. TB testing in wild deer began in 1996.

The Michigan DNR has conducted extensive TB testing of white-tailed deer, following the 1994 discovery of Bovine TB in a white-tailed deer in northeastern Michigan. In an effort to control and eradicate the disease, Michigan has tested 65,000 wild, free ranging deer and has found 285 TB-positive deer between 1995 and June of 2001.

"Hunters really care about having healthy deer in the state," Langenberg said. "There is usually high receptivity to the testing. We're really appreciative that hunters are so cooperative."

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT: Julie Langenberg (608) 266-3143

In contrast to its name, Eastern Equine Encephalitis can infect game birds

An outbreak of Eastern Equine Encephalitis (EEE) in horses has been occurring in Barron, Chippewa and Rusk Counties since the last week of July. At least 20 horses, all nonvaccinated animals, have developed nervous system disease consistent with EEE; many have died. Mosquitoes carry the EEE virus between animals.

EEE has occurred historically in Wisconsin, but only sporadic cases have previously been verified. An outbreak of this magnitude in horses has not been seen in WI in decades. Signs of the disease in affected horses include central nervous system dysfunction, high fever, and high mortality of unvaccinated animals.

(more)

EEE can also infect birds, principally non-native species such as pheasant and chukar partridge, and ratites (emu, ostrich). Affected chukar and pheasant usually appear dull and listless with ruffled feathers, are weak and uncoordinated, and develop progressive paralysis. Sickness is usually observed, but death of susceptible bird populations can occur. Most native species of bird can carry the EEE virus without getting sick but are a source of virus for mosquitoes to transmit.

Humans can also become infected with EEE and develop sickness, but human disease is infrequent. Infected people will develop generalized mild flu-like symptoms. Hunters can protect themselves by using repellents on your clothing and on exposed skin, wearing long sleeves and long pants, maintaining window screens and removing mosquito breeding ground such as containers, old tires, birdbaths or other objects where water can collect and mosquitoes can lay eggs.

The Departments of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection and Health and Family Services have issued the following information regarding Eastern Equine Encephalitis.

“The EEE virus is transmitted when an infected mosquito bites a human or horse. EEE infections in people can range from mild flu-like illness to severe and sometimes fatal illness. Because it is mosquito-borne, the infection typically occurs in mid-summer to early fall, and often near swampy or wetland areas. Isolated cases have been reported sporadically in horses from various areas of the state over the past 30 years, but only three human cases have been reported in Wisconsin in the same time.

Most EEE cases in humans do not cause any symptoms. When symptoms do occur, they generally appear 5 to 15 days after being bitten by an infected mosquito. Symptoms include high fever, fatigue, muscle ache, stiff necks, and tremors or confusion. In severe cases, inflammation of the brain (encephalitis) occurs, which may lead to convulsions, coma and death.”

Department of Natural Resources wildlife health specialists note that the EEE virus can remain infective in mosquitoes until the first heavy frost.

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT: Kerry Beheler (608) 267-6751

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Department of Natural Resources – CE/6
PO Box 7921 Madison WI 53707-7921

FOUR RULES OF FIREARM SAFETY

- T** Treat every firearm as if it is loaded
- A** Always point the muzzle in a safe direction
- B** Be certain of your target, and what's beyond it.
- K** Keep your finger outside the trigger guard and off the trigger until ready to shoot.

